

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today released the following statement praising the passage of H.R. 5466, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail Designation Act.

“I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this legislation which was introduced by my colleagues Jo Ann Davis of Virginia in the House and Paul Sarbanes in the Senate.

“Nearly 400 years ago, after helping establish the Jamestown colony and enduring capture by the native Powhatan people, Captain John Smith embarked on two voyages to explore the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. He and his small crew set off in an open, 28-foot shallop seeking greater knowledge of the region, its inhabitants, and its resources, while also attempting to find the Northwest Passage.

“During these and other expeditions, Captain Smith and his crew explored more than 3,000 miles of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In what is now Maryland’s 5th Congressional District, the team surveyed the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers and disembarked in present day Calvert, St. Mary’s, Charles, Prince George’s and Anne Arundel Counties.

“In 1612, Captain Smith published a map of the Chesapeake Bay region which remains quite accurate and was used for nearly a century by European settlers who colonized the region.

“This legislation will take a critical step in marking Captain Smith’s remarkable voyage and underscores the continued importance of the Chesapeake Bay to the people of our region and this nation.

“Passage and enactment of H.R. 5466 will amend the National Trails Act to include the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail – joining such historic routes as the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery. However, unlike existing national historic trails, the Captain Smith Trail is unique in that it is almost entirely water-based.

“In many instances, those experiencing the trail will have the opportunity to marvel at some of

the same sites that Captain Smith and his crew beheld 400 years ago. They will also be able to visit a number of museums and parks along the trail, such as the Calvert Marine Museum, Jefferson Patterson Park, and Piscataway Park which will help tell the story of this magnificent voyage.

“This legislation is supported by the National Park Service which determined that Captain Smith’s Chesapeake Bay voyages meet the criteria for national historic trails as set forth in the National Trails Act. It also has the support of a wide cross section of groups, including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the National Geographic Society, and the National Parks Conservation Society. I am proud to support it.”

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